

Why should teachers use nonfood rewards in the classroom?

Nonfood rewards promote a healthier school environment by encouraging healthy eating habits. When students are given pop, candy, and other sweets as a reward for good behavior and academic achievement, food becomes a primary motivator in their life. Because these foods have little nutritional value, using them as rewards contributes to poor eating habits.

Nonfood Rewards

The following is a list of options for nonfood rewards in the classroom. It is by no means a complete list; many additional ideas for nonfood rewards exist. Simply remember that motivating students is the goal.

Elementary School

- Stickers
- Pencils, pens, and markers
- Erasers
- Bookmarks
- Books
- Rulers
- Trinkets (magnets, frisbees, etc.)
- Paper
- Activity/game sheets
- Game time
- Reading time
- Class, homework time, or reading time in a special place (on the couch, outside, etc.)
- Extra recess



- Extra credit
- Extra art time
- Computer time
- Be the helper
- Teach class
- Sit by friends
- Eat lunch with the teacher or principal
- Eat lunch outdoors
- Have lunch or breakfast in the classroom
- Private lunch in the classroom with a friend
- Be a helper in another classroom
- Watch a fun video
- Walk with the principal or teacher
- Take a fun physical activity break
- Dance to favorite music in the classroom
- Show-and-tell
- Bank System—earn tokens for privileges
- Teacher or volunteer reads a special book to class
- Teacher performs a special skill (singing, cartwheel, etc.)
- Have free choice time
- Listen to a book on tape
- Listen to music while working
- Field trip



Middle School

- Sit with friends
- Listen to music while working
- Talk time at the end of class
- Reduced homework
- "No Homework" pass

- Extra credit
- Extra recess
- Fun video
- Assemblies
- Computer time
- Brainteasers
- Field trip
- Eat lunch or have class outside
- Stickers
- Pencils and pens
- Erasers
- Bookmarks
- Books
- Art time
- Coupons/gift certificates for video stores, music stores, and movies

High School

- Sit with friends
- Listen to music while working
- Eat lunch or have class outside
- Talk time at the end of class
- Reduced homework
- "No Homework" pass
- Extra credit
- Extra recess
- Fun video
- Assemblies
- Brainteasers
- Field trip
- Stickers
- Bookmarks
- Erasers
- Pencils and pens
- Books
- Computer time
- Art time
- Drawings for donated prizes





... about Rewards, Incentives, and Consequences in the Classroom

Rewards and incentives should be given careful consideration as to the messages they send to the students receiving them. Food should not be used as a reward or incentive in the classroom, but other, more appropriate rewards can be used (see the list of nonfood rewards in this pamphlet).



Teachers and other school personnel should not...

- Withhold food from a student as a consequence for inappropriate behavior or poor academic performance.
- Prohibit or deny student participation in recess or other physical activity as a consequence for inappropriate behavior or poor academic performance.
- Cancel recess or other physical activity time for instructional make-up time.

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For more information about creating a healthier classroom, visit...

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- <http://doe.sd.gov/oess/schoolhealth/index.asp>
- <http://doe.sd.gov/oess/cans/nutrition/index.asp>
- <http://www.healthysd.gov/>



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The Use of Nonfood Rewards in School

Creating a Healthier Classroom